794 or Koma/," Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo
561 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade,
561 whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 772 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation. Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions [844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about [845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 778 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course, not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

562 778 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself [754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dü[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

1 [dei ? —Analyst]

848 596 614 578 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime, his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

614 596 These disputes gain strength also from the difference in rank which the members have within the community. The totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

[562] Only male members can advance claims to the faya, and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa. On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they are fantan'-u, "powerless."

596 614 601 561 Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa, the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age,

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 583 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, he endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

421 424 A second category of property is made up of the reciprocal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand, and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

421 422 423 Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricultural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwellings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, in infinitum. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

587]

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 Impediments. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the fa to bring off a profitable deal. The fa, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the fa to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circumstances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

[562]

[85]

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1)
● 582
[554]

1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

562 581 595 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them. [848]

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns to the women and places the child on the lap of an old woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed., coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
[564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child, carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced the name, the griot again takes the child and, making a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father, or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally, "the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

882 in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends
[836] are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract
[582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female
● 562 sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theo-
421 retically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[127] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could [562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

68| The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; [562] spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the dugu-tigi) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

428 587 562 In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women, second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth of the faya ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle) [.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

428 For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of succession: " ... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these [191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we 858 have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice 582 the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her 583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, 593 who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion [586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes [431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

428 The wife may have personal property given to her by her
562 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
662 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

562 Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
561 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
575 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

562 The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

782 The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother,
778 M'gouni Domba, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

782 The saraka, a term derived from the Arabic word (صَدَقَة) meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the djiné genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. Saraka di, "to give a saraka,"
is the Bambara expression.

A saraka is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "soni do, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a saraka, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "saraka do, this is a saraka," and all present repeat after him: "saraka do, this is a saraka."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the saraka there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a saraka is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the saraka involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct saraka the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be
● [565] either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never chosen for a public saraka. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy, a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them

2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word [83] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat [562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

773 It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of 829 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

before, whoever wants to own a boli must unite with it in as close a bond as if he were contracting a fourou marriage. In order to seal this union he must offer kola nuts, fourou gosi (1), to the village head and

1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

the elders, in short, have a wedding (konio).

Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands and sing the praises of the Komo or the Kono. On the nights of the festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with kara, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the Nama is brought out (2), the women are summoned at day-

2. The phrase "to bring out the Nama" is my translation for the Bambara expression, Nama bora, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, a djigina so, "he came to visit us at home," (a djigina, ("he visited us at"...; so, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all boli.

break at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

778 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and
782 danced all night, they are shown the siri found by the djenfa tjéou (1)
562

1. Djenfa tjeou: those who run with heads of the Nama.

and the darotigi, or darotala (2). While these siri (3) are burned, the

2. Darotigi, or darotala: he who rings the bell and precedes the djenfa tjéou with a lantern.

[754]

3. The siri are sacred objects which initiates of siri, the souba, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the Nama is brought out 20 to 40 siri are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 The boli have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday
782 (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

[304]

4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [563] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ɔ̂, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and grandaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513 514] is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [293] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the 78 property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives 562 them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them, 428

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

768 the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From
562 then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves,
482 and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 . Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

1. If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]